

The opinion in support of the decision being entered today was *not* written for publication and is *not* binding precedent of the Board.

Paper No. 22

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte WAYNE EDWARD BEIMESCH



Appeal No. 2004-0829
Application 09/806,274

ON BRIEF

Before GARRIS, WARREN and TIMM, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

WARREN, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

Decision on Appeal

This is an appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 134 from the decision of the examiner finally rejecting claims 1 through 10, all of the claims in the application. Claims 1 and 8 are illustrative of the claims on appeal:

1. A method for measuring volatile organic compounds of a material produced in a process system having emissions, said method comprising:

(a) disposing an amount of said material in an enclosed bag having a sealable opening such that there is headspace above said material in said enclosed bag;

(b) storing said enclosed bag containing said solid material at the mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system such that equilibrium between said material and said headspace is reached; and

(c) introducing samples from said headspace into a flame ionization detector which thereby measures said volatile organic compounds of said material.

8. A kit for measuring the volatile organic compounds of a material produced in a process system having emissions, said kit comprising:

- (a) an enclosed bag having a sealable opening to allow an amount of said material to be placed in said enclosed bag such that there is headspace above said material; and
- (b) instructions for analyzing samples from said headspace in said enclosed bag, thereby providing said volatile organic compounds of said material.

Appealed claim 1 represents claims drawn to a method for measuring volatile organic compounds (VOCs) of a material produced in a process system having emissions comprising at least the steps of sealing an amount of the material in a bag such that a "headspace" remains above the enclosed sample; storing the enclosed sample to establish emission equilibrium between the material and the "headspace" at the mean exit temperature of emissions from the process system; and measuring the VOCs in the "headspace" with a flame ionization detector (FID). Appealed claim 8 represents claims drawn to a kit comprising at least a sealable bag and instructions for analyzing VOCs present in a "headspace" over material from a process system enclosed in the bag.

The references relied on by the examiner are:

Hemphill	5,140,845	Aug. 25, 1992
Robbins	4,930,906	Jun. 5, 1990

The examiner has rejected appealed claims 1 through 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Robbins, and appealed claims 8 through 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hemphill.

Appellant states that "Claims 1-7 stand or fall together and Claims 8-10 stand or fall together" (brief, page 2). Thus, we decide this appeal based on appealed claims 1 and 8. 37 CFR § 1.192(c)(7) (2003).

We reverse.

Rather than reiterate the respective positions advanced by the examiner and appellant, we refer to the examiner's answer and to appellant's brief and reply brief for a complete exposition thereof.

Opinion

In order to review the examiner's application of prior art to appealed claims 1 and 8, we must first interpret the language thereof by giving the claim terms their broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the written description in the specification as it would be interpreted by one of ordinary skill in this art, *see, e.g.*, *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054-55, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1997); *In re Zletz*, 893 F.2d 319, 321-22, 13 USPQ2d 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989), without reading into these claims any limitation or particular embodiment which is disclosed in the specification. *See Zletz, supra; In re Priest*, 582 F.2d 33, 37, 199 USPQ 11, 15 (CCPA 1978).

The claim language of appealed claim 1 at issue here is the preambular phrase “[a] method for measuring volatile organic compounds of a material produced in a process system having emissions,” which method comprises at least specified steps (a) through (c). We determine that this phrase must be given weight as a claim limitation which characterizes the claimed method in order to give meaning to the claim and properly define the invention, because in the body of the claim, the language “said material”¹ in step (a), “mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system” in step (b) and “measures said volatile organic compounds of said material” in step (c) refers back to the preambular language. *See generally, In re Stencel*, 828 F.2d 751, 754-55, 4 USPQ2d 1071, 1073 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

Appellant submits that this claim language encompasses only “closed” process systems that have “VOC emissions” and not “systems open to the atmosphere,” pointing out that the “process systems” at page 4, lines 26-28, of the written description in the specification, “are “closed systems, and as such have dynamic air flow properties,” and that the claimed methods encompassed by claim 1 thus specify the generation and measurement of VOCs produced in a closed process system having emissions (brief, pages 2-3; reply brief, pages 2-3).

We cannot subscribe to appellant's position. We determine that the broadest reasonable interpretation of the plain language of the claim phrase taken in light of the claim language as a

¹ We address the term “a material” in the preamble of claim 1, the term “said material” in steps (a) and (c), and the term “said solid material” in step (b) with respect to compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, under *Other Issues* below.

whole and the written description in the specification, requires that the claimed method measures the VOCs of *any* "material," and thus can include liquid, paste or solid "material," as set forth in the specification (page 3, lines 3-4), which is "produced in" *any* "process system," open or closed, "having emissions," that can be VOC emissions, wherein the "material" produced in the process system can contain VOCs. Thus, "a material" can include any intermediate or final "product" that is produced by "a process system having emissions," including materials that are VOCs *per se*. However, while the "process system" can be open or closed, it must be one in which "the mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system" can be determined in order to establish the temperature at which the "enclosed bag containing said material" is stored so that "equilibrium between said material and said headspace is reached" as specified in appealed claim 1.

Indeed, we find *no* requirement in the claim language as a whole or in the written description in the specification, that "a process system" must be a "closed system" as appellant contends. We determine that one of ordinary skill in this art would recognize that the "[e]xemplary process systems" at page 4, lines 26-28, of the written description in the specification, can be "open systems," that is, systems open to the atmosphere, wherein VOCs emitted by such systems can be monitored with respect to amount and temperature as they exit the system to the atmosphere, and wherein the amount of VOC "emissions" from the "process system" has no relationship to the amount of VOCs in the intermediate or final "product" even at the "mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system." We further find no explanation in the written description in the specification why one of ordinary skill in this art would consider "storage tanks," which can be vented to the atmosphere even when the "product" therein contains VOCs, to be an example of "a process system." We note here that we find no support for appellant's position in specification Example I wherein samples of detergent particles are "taken at the *inlet* of the dryer" (specification, page 3; emphasis supplied) and thus, the measurement of the VOCs in this *starting material* does not constitute "measuring volatile organic compounds of a material produced in a process system having emissions" as required by appealed claim 1. In any event, limitations from an embodiment cannot be read into a claim unless there is basis in the claim language as a whole or in the written description in the specification to do so.

Considering now the ground of rejection of appealed claim 1 under § 103(a) over Robbins, it is well settled that in order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the examiner must show that some objective teaching, suggestion or motivation in the applied prior art taken as a whole and/or knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in this art would have led that person to the claimed invention as a whole, including each and every limitation of the claim arranged as required by the claim, without recourse to the teachings in appellant's disclosure. *See generally, In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1358, 47 USPQ2d 1453, 1458 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *Pro-Mold and Tool Co. v. Great Lakes Plastics Inc.*, 75 F.3d 1568, 1573, 37 USPQ2d 1626, 1629-30 (Fed. Cir. 1996); *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 1074-76, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598-1600 (Fed. Cir. 1988); *In re Dow Chem. Co.*, 837 F.2d 469, 473, 5 USPQ2d 1529, 1531-32 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

We agree with appellant that the examiner has not logically established a *prima facie* case of obviousness of the claimed method encompassed by appealed claim 1 as we have interpreted this claim above. We find that Robbins acknowledges that the so-called “[h]eadspace sampling techniques” for testing “a consistent volume or weight of ground water or soil mixed with water in a container, sealing the container, agitating, allowing time to permit volatile constituents to be released into the air headspace of the container, and then using a detector to measure the volatile constituent in the headspace” as applied to leakage of material around “storage tanks” was known (col. 1. lines 48-58), and discloses improvements on that process with respect to leakage from “storage tanks,” including the use of FID to measure the VOCs in the water and/or soil and water material (e.g., cols. 1-2). However, we determine that the examiner has not provided scientific argument or objective evidence establishing that one of ordinary skill in this art would have adapted the “headspace” method for measuring VOCs in ground water and water and soil samples from areas around “storage tanks” as taught by Robbins, to a “material produced by a process system having [VOC] emissions” using “the mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system” to establish “equilibrium between said material and said headspace” as required by appealed claim 1.

While Robbins recognizes the effect of temperature with respect to “an equilibrium concentration” in the “headspace” at col. 5, lines 1-6, as the examiner points out (answer,

page 3), the examiner has not established why one of ordinary skill in this art would have found in this disclosure the objective teaching, suggestion or motivation to use “the mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system” used to prepare “a material” to obtain “headspace” equilibrium concentration of the enclosed “material.” Indeed, one of ordinary skill in this art would have reasonably inferred from Robbins that the equilibrium temperature can be the ambient temperature of the area around the “storage tanks” where the ground water or soil mixed with water was taken, or lab room temperature,² and not that “the mean exit temperature of said emissions of said system” used to produce “a material” is a result effective variable to determine the VOCs content of that product “material.” *See In re Antonie*, 559 F.2d 618, 619-20, 195 USPQ 6, 8-9 (CCPA 1977); *see also Dow Chem.*, *supra*.

Accordingly, in the absence of a *prima facie* case of obviousness, we reverse the ground of rejection.

The claim language of appealed claim 8 plainly specifies a kit comprising at least “an enclosed bag having a sealable opening to allow an amount of said material to be placed . . . [therein] such that there is headspace above said material,” and “instructions for analyzing samples from said headspace in said enclosed bag thereby providing said volatile organic compounds of said material” for use in the method “for measuring volatile organic compounds of a material produced in a process system having emissions” as set forth in the preamble. Contrary to the examiner’s interpretation (answer, page 5), we are of the opinion that the preambular language must be given weight as a claim limitation which characterizes the claimed kit with respect to the “instructions” contained therein as set forth in the body of the claim. *See generally, Stencil*, *supra*.

In considering the patentability of appealed claim 8 with respect to the Hemphill under § 103(a), the printed matter “instructions” must be taken into account to determine “whether there exists any new and unobvious functional relationship between the printed matter and the

² It is well settled that a reference stands for all of the specific teachings thereof as well as the inferences one of ordinary skill in this art would have reasonably been expected to draw therefrom, see *In re Fritch*, 972 F.2d 1260, 1264-65, 23 USPQ2d 1780, 1782-83 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *In re Preda*, 401 F.2d 825, 826, 159 USPQ 342, 344 (CCPA 1968), presuming skill on the part of this person. *In re Sovish*, 769 F.2d 738, 743, 226 USPQ 771, 774 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

substrate.” *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385-86, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983). “Where the printed matter is not functionally related to the substrate, the printed matter will not distinguish the invention from the prior art in terms of patentability.” *Id.*, 703 F.2d at 1385, 217 USPQ at 404. “What is required is the existence of *differences* between the appealed claims and the prior art sufficient to establish patentability.” *Id.*, 703 F.2d at 1385, 217 USPQ at 404. “As part of its burden to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, *see In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992), the burden of establishing the absence of a novel, nonobvious functional relationship rests with the PTO.” *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994) (“The PTO did not establish that the ADOs, within the context of the entire claims, lack a new and nonobvious functional relationship with the memory.”).

The examiner does not give the preambular language “any patentable weight,” interpreting the method specified therein to be an “intended use, that being for holding VOC-containing material from a process system” (answer, page 5). Thus, the examiner finds that appealed claim 8 is “anticipated by the device of Hemphill where a resealable bag (reference item 10) has instructions (references items 18 and 20),” and holds that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been “motivated to ensure that appropriate instructions related to the intended use of the bag would be included as a matter of design choice” (*id.*, pages 5-6). Appellant points out that “Hemphill teaches a cooking grease disposal bag” and thus, “does not teach or suggest a kit for measuring volatile organic compounds produced in a process system having emissions as” claimed, thus arguing that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established (brief, page 4, original emphasis deleted; *see also* reply brief, page 4). The examiner responds that it is not disputed that the “bag of Hemphill has the inherent capability to store VOC-containing material,” and that “Hemphill need not suggest or otherwise indicate that their bag can be used for storing VOC-containing material from a process system” (answer, page 9).

We find that Hemphill teaches a bag which when folded at one or more of lines 14, 15 or 19 and temporarily or permanently sealed according to the instructions printed at 18 and 20, and filled with “grease” accordingly, will provide a “headspace” above the “grease” material contained therein as shown in specifications **Figs. 1 through 4** (*see, e.g.*, cols. 3-4), and thus

agree with the examiner's findings with respect to this reference. However, what is missing from the examiner's analysis is consideration of whether there is no new and unobvious functional relationship between the printed matter "instructions" and the sealable bag of Hemphill which contains no instructions thereon, and indeed, there is no disclosure in this reference, with respect to "instructions" concerning the use of the bag in the specified "process." Accordingly, in the absence of such analysis we find that the examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness, and therefore, we reverse this ground of rejection.

The examiner's decision is reversed .

Other Issues

We decline to exercise our authority under 37 CFR § 1.196(b) (2003) and enter on the record new grounds of rejection of the appealed claims with respect to following matters, and instead suggest that the examiner consider the following upon any further prosecution of the appealed claims subsequent to the termination of this appeal, supplying the record with any additional prior art as necessary in these respects.

The term "a material" in the preamble of appealed claim 1 and the term "said material" in the first specified step of the process method claimed therein which refers back to the former term, is not limited to "said solid material" set forth in the second specified step of the claimed process which must refer back to "said material." Indeed, we find no claim language or disclosure in the written description in appellant's specification as it would be interpreted by one of ordinary skill in this art, *see Morris, supra; Zletz, supra*, which limits the term "a material" in the preamble to a "solid material," and indeed, appellant states in the specification that "[a]s used herein, the 'material' for which the VOCs are required can be a liquid, paste or solid" (page 3, lines 3-4). Thus, it would appear that, *prima facie*, appealed claims 1 through 8 in fact fail to set out and circumscribe a particular area with a reasonable degree of precision and particularity as required by this statutory provision, in view of the use of the terms "a material" and "said solid material" in appealed claim 1 which are of different scope. *In re Moore*, 439 F.2d 1232, 1235, 169 USPQ 236, 238 (CCPA 1971).

With respect to appealed claims 1 and 8, it reasonably appears from the prior art acknowledged in col. 1 of Robbins that there is other prior art relevant to "headspace sampling techniques."

Finally, with respect to appealed claim 8, the examiner should consider the disclosure in Robbins of instructions to place a material that can contain VOCs in a sealable bag in a manner to leave a "headspace" for sampling purposes (cols. 1-6), either alone or with respect to Hemphill and/or other prior art.

REVERSED

Bradley R. Harris

~~BRADLEY R. GARRIS
Administrative Patent Judge~~


CHARLES E. WARREN

CHARLES F. WARREN
Administrative Patent Judge

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Catherine Timm
CATHERINE TIMM
Administrative Patent Judge

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